

Homeowners ask ADOT about canceled freeway meeting

by **Colleen Sparks** - May. 20, 2008 02:33 PM
The Arizona Republic

When freeway team members canceled a meeting with a homeowners group, several residents decided to go to them.

Several Lakewood Community Association residents, as well as people who live elsewhere in Ahwatukee Foothills, expressed concerns about the proposed South Mountain Freeway during an Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee meeting Monday night. The freeway study team, which is led by the Arizona Department of Transportation, talked about its work on a draft environmental impact statement for the proposed freeway during Monday's meeting.

A Lakewood meeting that had been planned for tonight with the freeway study team was canceled after the team decided not to attend.

The freeway would run along the Pecos Road alignment in Ahwatukee and cut through South Mountain Park. The freeway would then reconnect to Interstate 10 at 55th Avenue in the West Valley.

Lakewood could lose at least 55 homes if the freeway were built, Lakewood resident John Rodriguez said.

"Everyone in Ahwatukee is affected by this freeway," Lakewood resident Eve Morse said. "We're going to have every criminal on the west side (drive) over to Ahwatukee. How do you think our home values are going to be impacted?"

"I don't think that Lakewood has really been

given good consideration," Morse said.

Morse also asked why tonight's Lakewood meeting was canceled.

Tim Tait, an ADOT spokesman and study team member, said the study team decided to "focus attention" on the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team meetings as a place for the public to provide input.

Also, the study team did not "have a lot new to say" about the freeway to the HOA, Tait said.

The citizens advisory team meets at 6 p.m. Thursday in the Student Union Hall at South Mountain Community College, 7050 S. 24th St., Phoenix. That group will eventually recommend whether the freeway should be built.

Some Lakewood residents said it was hard to plan home repair projects because they didn't know when or if the freeway was going to be built.

Lakewood resident Beth Gagnon said she had turned down job offers because she

Advertisement



Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

didn't know if the freeway would be built and "who would buy my home?" if it was. Gagnon said she believes the study team keeps "talking in circles."

Her neighbor, Alma Torres, said someone in an ADOT vehicle had taken a photo of her home the other day.

"I felt violated because she wouldn't give me additional information," Torres said. "We want to make home improvements. We just want to move on with our lives."

Tait said that even if the proposed freeway were approved today, the earliest "we could start moving dirt is 2012."

He also stressed that public input is being taken during the planning process.

Ultimately, ADOT and the Federal Highway Administration will decide if the freeway should be built and the Maricopa Association of Governments will decide if a half-cent sales tax funds it, Tait said.

The South Mountain Freeway would help alleviate some Valley traffic though no one freeway project would answer all the Valley's traffic congestion, he said. The Valley is expected to have 6.2 million residents in 2030, a freeway study showed.

Tait said the draft environmental impact statement might be released sometime next year.

Advertisement



FormatDynamics

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™